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Birkin NFT: Everything You Need To Know About The 'Handbag' Of The Future

Birkins for the digital age?

BY CLEMENTINA JACKSON 17/12/2021

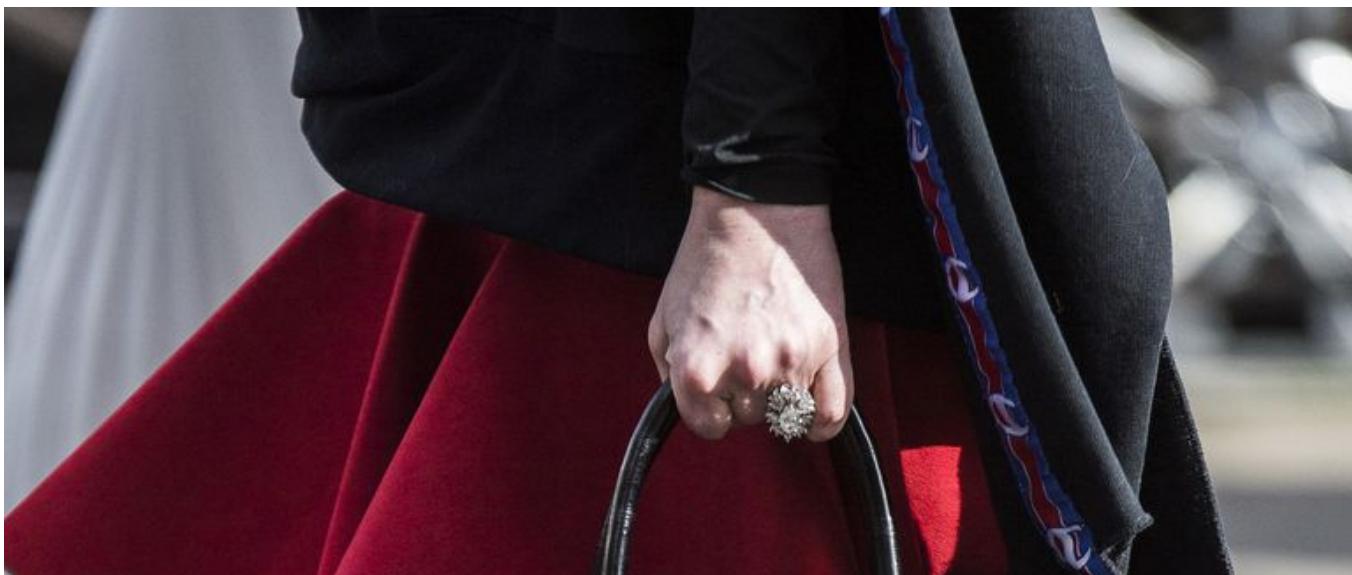


There is little more desirable in the luxury fashion sphere – or more difficult to get your hands on – than the holy grail of bags: the Hermès Birkin. Created in 1984, it was originally designed for, and then named after, actor Jane Birkin – before ascending to cult status and picking up an ever-heftier price tag and waiting list along with it.

Today, however, it seems there is one other option for bagging a Birkin, and that is in the form of a new NFT, which recently dropped in the digital sphere. The so-called MetaBirkin is the creation of LA-based digital artist Mason Rothschild, and part of a project introduced earlier this month at Art Basel Miami.

Unsurprisingly, it *immediately* caught the interest of the fashion world.

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The Hermès Birkin is the ultimate fashion status symbol.

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For those of us on the outskirts of the rather complex metaverse, NFT is short for a 'non-fungible token', defined by [Collins Dictionary](#) as 'a unique digital certificate, registered in a blockchain, that is used to record ownership of an asset such as an artwork or a collectible'. This essentially means that you can buy and sell the 'metadata' associated with a particular image, just like you would a painting or an actual Hermès Birkin.

It's important to emphasise here that these MetaBirkins are *not* real, in the sense that they're not the products of the French luxury house Hermès, nor physical handbags.

Rothschild designed just 100 MetaBirkins, creating a level of exclusivity not dissimilar to that of the original [Hermès bag](#) (which can be worth between £8,600 to £145,000), and featuring bright coloured faux fur, patterns and even depictions of famous artworks including the *Mona Lisa*. And while each MetaBirkin was initially sold for a rather modest 0.1ETH (the Ethereum blockchain's cryptocurrency), prices have since skyrocketed to near real-Birkin levels – with some selling for as much as the crypto equivalent of £40,000.



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As for Hermès, the brand recently issued a statement to the *Financial Times* which reads: 'These NFTs infringe upon the intellectual property and trademark rights of Hermès and are an example of fake Hermès products in the metaverse.'

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'Rothschild declined to remark on Hermès' statement but a representative said Hermès had not made contact or taken any action,' reports the *Business of Fashion*. *ELLE UK* has reached out to Rothschild for comment.

According to BOF, Rothschild addressed the bag's design on Discord, a chat forum used among the crypto community. 'This is my artistic take on an icon, my remix,' he said, prior to Hermès' statement.

While not Hermès-approved, the MetaBirkin is just the latest in a string of high-end fashion NFT launches. Coach, for example, has just released its first collection of NFTs as part of a holiday campaign, while earlier this year Gucci said that 'it is only a matter of time' before other luxury brands launch their own after the Italian brand released its first NFT as part of a newly-unveiled auction at Christie's.

And who could forget the now-infamous instance of model Emily Ratajkowski 'reclaiming' and 'buying back' an image of her by artist Richard Prince as an NFT?



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Introducing Buying Myself Back: A Model for Redistribution, an NFT available at auction [@christiesinc](#) on May 14.

The digital terrain should be a place where women can share their likeness as they choose, controlling the usage of their image and receiving whatever potential capital attached. Instead, the internet has more frequently served as a space where others exploit and distribute images of women's bodies without their consent and for another's profit. Art has historically functioned similarly: works of unnamed muses sell for millions of dollars and build careers of traditionally male artists, while the subjects of these works receive nothing. I have become all too familiar with this narrative, as chronicled in my 2020 essay for New York Magazine, Buying Myself Back.

NFTs carry the potential to allow women ongoing control over their image and the ability to receive rightful compensation for its usage and distribution. Link in bio for more information

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With NFTs having well and truly disrupted the traditional art market already, we wait with curiosity to see how they impact the fashion market in the near future.

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